

HHC, 4th BCT 'Vipers' aim to capture Fort Hood intramural soccer championship

Story by Spc. Jason Dangel
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As warm spring air fills the early evening sky and the sun sets off in the horizon, the sounds of running feet and the smell of green grass emanate from a jubilant Fort Hood Stadium.

Happiness, disappointment, anger and despair are only some of the emotions evident to onlookers as the battle ensues on the playing field April 16.

No, this isn't a standard company-level training event, nor is it a family oriented organizational day. The event was an intramural soccer showdown between the "Viper" Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and one of their unlucky foes.

The Vipers, under the leadership of Capt. Andrew Byrd, commander, HHC, are aiming to capture the Fort Hood Intramural Soccer Championship and have started off with a record of five wins and two losses after winning 3-2.

"In my opinion, the team has been very successful up to this point," said Byrd, a native of Guntersville, Ala.

"We have lost some good players due to (permanent change of station), but we are still doing well—and more importantly, this tournament is giving everyone a chance to come together and have a chance to unwind after work," he added.

With at least eight games left in the season and a playoff berth in sight, Byrd and his group of hard-nosed officers, NCOs and Soldiers look to take home the gold.

“Realistically speaking and first and foremost, our priority is making the playoffs, and we will go from there,” said Master Sgt. Jose Blanco, brigade surgeon noncommissioned officer-in-charge, HHC.

“We are not the best team in the tournament, but we are not the worst team either,” Blanco said, who is the acting head coach. “We have a lot of strong, talented players, and we have the potential to win.”

Regardless of whether or not the Vipers go the distance to bring a championship trophy to the unit, the Soldiers are taking advantage of the opportunity to have fun and build unity within the unit. Soldiers have bought into the concept of teamwork and esprit de’ corps.

“Even though everyone wants to win, and we are all competitive in nature, we look at this whole thing as a team-building event,” said Richard Jack-James, topographic imagery specialist, HHC, and a native of Tobago. “We play to have fun, and we play to be together.”

“But on the other hand, you can only truly enjoy the game if you win,” Jack-James said, laughing. “Our goal is to win every game and be competitive, and being competitive as well as working together makes a good team.”

The soccer tournament, which is comprised of six teams from various units on post, is set to run through May, said Homer Beck, Fort Hood Intramural Sports Coordinator.

First- and second-place teams will receive trophies and t-shirts after the championship, which is tentatively scheduled for the first week of June, Beck said.

For more information on the Fort Hood Intramural Soccer Tournament, or to join one of the teams, contact Homer Beck at (254) 288-3622.

All games are held Mondays and Wednesdays from 6-9p.m. at Fort Hood Stadium.



Evans dribbles downfield

Capt. Kenneth Evans, commander, Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and offensive forward for the 4th BCT Vipers intramural soccer team, flies down the field during a game verses an opposing team at Fort Hood Stadium April 16 in which the Vipers won 3-2.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Jack-James, HHC, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.)



Adams moves downfield

Sgt. Jennifer Adams, military intelligence specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and a left side defender for the 4th BCT Vipers Intramural Soccer Team, dribbles down field during a game verses the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div., at Fort Hood Stadium April 16.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Jack-James, HHC, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.)



Soyka shoots

Capt. Mike Soyka, operations officer, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, an offensive forward for the 4th BCT Vipers Soccer Team, rips a shot at the goal during a game verses Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div., April 16.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Jack-James, HHC, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.)